

Slavery, in its Present Aspects and Relations.

A

S E R M O N

PREACHED

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BY

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"Never did there devolve on any generation of men higher trusts than now devolve upon us, for the preservation of this Constitution, and the harmony and peace of all who are to live under it." — WEBSTER.

"I have already intimated to you the dangers of parties in the State, with particular reference to the founding them on geographical discriminations. Let me now take a more comprehensive view and warn you, in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally." — WASHINGTON.

"Thou hast multiplied the nation and not increased the joy."

"*Heu pietas, heu prisca fides!*"

"*Discite justiciam moniti, et non temnere Divos.*"

. . . . "*Et incipient magni procedere menses.*"

S E R M O N .

MATTHEW 7: 12.

THEREFORE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD DO TO YOU,
DO YE EVEN SO TO THEM, FOR THIS IS THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS.

I HAVE not selected this text for the purpose of a logical development of the principle it contains, but only as the most appropriate sentiment I could think of, to stand at the head of a discourse, in which the relations of individuals and of large bodies of men to each other are to be brought under review. It is the second of those two great laws which pervade the entire universe of accountable mind, and sum up the whole of duty. It incites to sympathy towards those who are wronged, to a candid estimation of persons whose conduct we condemn, and an unselfish course as respects all mankind. Really adopted it would moderate, in most cases, the violence of dispute, give a just balance to statements affecting character, and while it takes nothing from an honest indignation against injustice, it would lead to that fairness and considerateness in dealing with others which commends itself to conscience and secures the approbation of God.

In the spirit of this text, I propose to speak this morning of AMERICAN SLAVERY IN ITS PRESENT ASPECTS AND RELATIONS.

I must forewarn you that my discourse is of unusual length, but as it is an unusual subject, and we shall have no service in the afternoon, I hope you will tolerate it.

In the spring of 1834, on the day of our annual Fast just twenty years ago, I took occasion to present my views on the subject of slavery, at that time just beginning, not only to agitate the country anew, but to threaten the harmony, if not the very existence of our churches. The entire moral sentiment of the North was then, as it is now, opposed to it. As a possible means of alleviating the evil, or at least as furnishing opportunities for a candid consideration of it, the benevolence of the Eastern States cherished the American Colonization Society, while for this or other reasons, it found considerable favor at the South.

In these circumstances, a new and almost frenzied anti-slavery sentiment suddenly sprung up among us, not only outrunning public sentiment, but heaping anathemas upon the alleged tolerance of northern freemen, even more than upon the southern holders of slaves. The leaders of this movement were chiefly men who denounced slavery, the churches, the ministry, the Sabbath, and nearly all the positive institutions of Christianity together. Its spirit was a fiery spirit, blazing up here and there in the community, inflaming the minds of many excitable, but not often the most judicious, members of our churches, and threatening to overturn the very altars of God. I observed its approaches towards my own congregation, and took the opportunity I have mentioned to offer such remarks as I thought might tend to the

benefit of the people under my pastoral care, fortifying them against impending dangers, and preserving a Christian moderation among them.

I then stood on the old anti-slavery ground of 1787 and 1820. I expressed my abhorrence of slavery as a system, and adopted as my own that strong language of Thomas Jefferson, which has since been so often quoted, who said that he trembled for his country when he remembered that God is just, that the Almighty had no attributes which would take sides with us in opposition to this oppressed people, and uttered prophetic intimations of a possible change, at some future day, in the ascendancy of races, and a terrible retribution. At the same time, I brought to view some apologetic circumstances which might serve to mitigate the asperity of our feelings towards the South, and especially towards its godly ministers and Christians. I showed that indiscriminating invective, especially when uttered at such a distance from the scene of action, could have no possible tendency to remove the evil, while at home, nothing but strifes, the division of churches, and a spirit totally anti-christian could be anticipated from it. I urged candid reflection, moderation, charity. I proposed that we should present ourselves before our southern brethren with an open, benevolent countenance, with earnest but generous words. I was for coming to them with some such language as this: "Your fathers and ours were engaged in the accursed traffic of slavery together. You took more of the sinews and souls of men, we took much of the money for which souls and sinews were exchanged. Let us now make common cause, and in the name of humanity and of God, unite in good faith and in a fair participation of sacrifices, to limit the evil at once, and

take measures for its earliest practicable removal. Meanwhile, we propose to fulfil our constitutional pledges to you — but we can, on no account, do any thing to increase or perpetuate a wrong which we believe is offensive to God, and which threatens the existence of the nation.”

After the lapse of time, during which great changes have taken place in the Old World and the New, and the nation has been shaken once and again by this subject as by an earthquake, my position is substantially what it was twenty years ago. I feel no more complacency in slavery, notwithstanding the compromises on which public sentiment has been constrained to settle, and no more disposition to sympathize with them who would sunder the Union, or “drive the ploughshare through the churches,” in rash attempts to remove it.

Since 1834, though I have often found it necessary to make some public allusion to the subject, I have never devoted to it a single entire discourse. I have never mentioned it in my preaching on the Sabbath in a way to disturb, unnecessarily, the feelings of those who did not altogether accord with me, and rarely at all, except to pray that oppression may cease and universal freedom, education, piety and fraternity take its place.

I present my views to-day on slavery, in some of its present aspects and relations, because I would contribute what little light I possess towards a just estimation of this terrible subject; because also it may be well for a people and convenient for a minister that his position on such a question should be understood, and because recent events seem to call on those who occupy the high places of moral influence for an expression of opinion. Let it be understood, however, that I speak for nobody but

myself. If my words should meet with your approbation, I shall be gratified. If they do not, while you accord to me an honest intention, you can correct by your own judgments whatever you think to be erroneous in mine.

As a basis for intelligent remark, let us take a brief historical view of American slavery.

When Jamestown was settled in 1608, slaveholding in some form was practised nearly the whole world over. To the early Virginia planters it was considered a necessity and a matter of course. They were at first supplied with bond laborers from the mother country. These were not negroes, but white men, convicts, captives taken in war, poor debtors, and other poor people who were either kidnapped for the purpose or induced to emigrate and serve in this capacity for a time. In all these cases the term of service was limited. But within the limits specified, the laborers were bought and sold as cattle. The planters soon found it for their interest rather to repress than to encourage this species of emigration, and had it not been for the African trade, the white bondmen would have become early amalgamated with the free population, and long before our Revolution, Virginia would have been a free colony.

The first introduction of negroes took place in 1620, a few months before the Plymouth Colony landed in America. They were brought over by a Dutch man-of-war, and twenty in number were offered for sale. Thirty years after this first importation of African slaves, there were not more of them in the whole Colony, than one to fifty white inhabitants. For slavery, as it now exists, we are greatly indebted to the avarice of Great Britain. In 1662, "a Company of Royal Adventurers of England trading into Africa" was constituted, for the express

purpose of procuring negroes from Africa to be employed on the plantations of the new world. The manifestos for subscriptions set forth that this trade was formerly attended with "profit and honor" to the nation; that his majesty's subjects had been disturbed in the trade by the people of other countries, and that his majesty's dominions in America were suffering from want of a supply of this class of laborers. It was proposed to obtain three thousand negroes from the coast of Africa as soon as possible, and as many more, from time to time, as could be sold to the planters at reasonable rates. The main object was to improve colonial agriculture and increase English commerce, both with the coasts of Africa and America. A list of the Royal Adventurers has been preserved. It is a curious and mournful relic, considering the noble signatures it contains, of persons who seem to have been unconscious of the mighty wrong they were committing. It commences thus:—

"The King's Most Excellent Majesty.

The Queen's Majesty.

His Royal Highness the Duke of York.

His Highness Prince Rupert.

The Duke of Albermarle.

The Earl of St. Albans.

The Earl of Anglesy, Lord Arlington," &c.*

The trade was carried on with great vigor and profit for a series of years. Though many of the colonists were eager to obtain slaves, and many others engaged in the business from mere mercenary motives, yet it must be confessed that the colonial governments more frequently threw obstacles in its way, than favored it. No less than twenty-three acts were passed by the Virginia

* See Declarations of the Company of Royal Adventurers, Lib. H., Col.

legislatures, beginning in 1699, for the express purpose of limiting the importation of slaves, by the imposition of duties. But no acts of this kind ever met with the royal favor. On the contrary, the commerce was stimulated to the highest degree. Lands were offered to settlers in the West Indies on condition that the proprietors would purchase and employ a prescribed number of slaves. The American colonists often remonstrated, and sometimes boldly and earnestly, against this traffic. They feared that this class of the population would become so numerous as to prevent a higher order of inhabitants from settling among them, and to jeopardize their own liberties. They seem also to have perceived that commerce in the souls of men was to some extent an outrage on human nature. In 1772, a very humble memorial was sent by them, beseeching the king, "to remove those restraints on his majesty's governors of the Colony, which inhibit their assenting to such laws as might check so very pernicious a commerce;" declaring also that the trade has long been considered one "of great inhumanity," and "under its present encouragement," retarding "the settlement of the colonies with more useful inhabitants," and dangerous "to the very existence of his majesty's dominions in America."* No answer, so far as can be ascertained, was ever given to this earnest and reasonable petition. The same relative feeling on the subject continued down to the Revolution.

In the Northern States, though many individuals engaged in this execrable traffic, public sentiment was still more strongly opposed to it. When Thomas Keyser and James Smith, "the latter a member of the church

* See Walsh's Appeal from the Judgments of Great Britain.

in Boston," brought a cargo of slaves to our shores in 1645, there was an universal outcry against them as malefactors and murderers. They were charged with the crime of manstealing, and the negroes were sent back at the public expense. Still in process of time, slavery found its way into the New England as well as the Southern States, and became to some extent domesticated among us. It is not unfair, however, to observe that through the whole country, public sentiment rather repressed than encouraged this traffic in *men*, and that the New World was far behind the Old in entailing the curse of slavery upon us. Grahame, the historian, in a pamphlet published at London in 1842, entitled "Who is to Blame?" disputes this fact. But after considerable examination, I think it capable of being demonstrated. Mr. Jefferson was no falsifier, when in his first draft of the Declaration of Independence, he said, "He (the king of England) has waged civil war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty, in the persons of a distant people who never offended him; captivating and carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere, or to incur a miserable death in their transportation thither. This piratical warfare, the opprobrium of infidel powers, is the warfare of the Christian king of Great Britain: determined to keep open a market where *men* should be bought and sold, he prostituted his negative for suppressing every legislative attempt to prohibit or to restrain this execrable commerce."

I take occasion to say here as I may not have another so good an opportunity, that while it is not of importance to apportion the exact measure of guilt connected with the African slave trade between this country and

Great Britain, the course taken, for some years past in England, respecting American slavery, whose population has been kept incessantly inflamed on the subject, by persons bearing the name but some of them having little of the spirit of Americans, can have no other tendency than to exasperate and produce retort. It is not in me to say aught maliciously of that noble nation. The father-land of our fathers — the country of Shakespere and Bacon, of Barrow and Milton, I am proud of her constitutional liberties, and her high position in the scale of powerful nations. Wilberforce and Clarkson are household words of honor among us. Every boyish heart in our school rooms has bounded with exultation, from the days of Cowper till now, at the words “we have no slaves in England” — “they touch our soil, that moment they are free.” But the English populace should know what many of its cultivated minds sufficiently understand, that information ought ever to precede the passing of judgments, and that charity and forbearance, rather than insolence and invective are the mighty dissolvents of that deadly concretion which our parentage has entailed upon us, and under the miseries of which our nation has groaned from the beginning.

At the time of the Revolution, the leading men of the South as well as of the North, almost universally looked upon slavery as involving a great moral wrong, an anomaly in our institutions, a dangerous political evil, and only to be tolerated for a time. It was in this state of public sentiment, that the compromises of the Constitution were confirmed. Though compromises which ought to stand till the two great compromising parties mutually consent to their removal, they were never intended for all coming generations. They were framed

as the necessity of the times. The words "slave" and "slavery" were nowhere introduced into them. Mr. Madison, himself a slaveholder, opposed the introduction of those terms, on the ground that he did not wish to see an acknowledgment in the Constitution of the United States that there could be property in men. Arrangements were made to put an end forever to the foreign slave-trade, dealing in which has long since been declared by our government to be piracy. In 1787, under the old confederation, an ordinance was passed excluding slavery from all the territory northwest of the Ohio River, that is all the territory over which the Congress of the United States then had any control. This ordinance securing that great territory to freedom forever, received the vote of every State in the Union. The entire South was in its favor, but a single individual and he a northern man voted against it. Here, then, we have the sentiment of the country, at the time of the Revolution, respecting slavery.

Not many years, however, passed away before a change of feeling began to be apparent on the subject, especially at the South. In 1802, the rich cotton lands of Alabama and Mississippi were ceded by Georgia to the United States, and no proviso excluding slavery was applied to them. In 1803, the government of the United States purchased a vast territory from France, generally known as the Louisiana purchase. It included what are now the States of Louisiana, Arkansas and Missouri, and the extensive region of Nebraska and Kansas now in dispute. In 1819, Florida was ceded to the United States. These territories came in without restrictions. They were specially devoted neither to slavery nor to freedom. The time for fixing their

future character by legislative enactment had not yet come.

The first great contest between the North and South took place in 1819–1820. It arose on the question of authorizing Missouri to form a Constitution preparatory to admission into the Union, the North insisting that if received at all, it must be on conditions which would eventually put an end to slavery within its bounds; the South demanding that no pledges of the kind should be exacted. The excitement was great; it pervaded the country, and wore for a time a most threatening aspect. I have a most vivid recollection of it, though then quite young. This is not the time or place for details. Suffice it to say, the dispute was settled by a compromise, now known as the Missouri compromise. Missouri was to be admitted into the Union, without prohibition of slavery within her bounds, and as a compensation to the North, an additional clause was introduced into the bill, forever excluding slavery from all territory belonging to the Louisiana purchase, north of $36^{\circ}, 30'$, north latitude. It is in these words: "And be it further enacted, that in all that territory ceded by France to the United States, under the name of Louisiana, which lies north of $36^{\circ}, 30'$, north latitude, excepting only such part thereof as is included within the limits of the State contemplated by this act, slavery and involuntary servitude, otherwise than in the punishment of crimes whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall be and is hereby *forever* prohibited." Missouri was received the following year.

In 1845 the annexation of Texas took place, and nearly the whole of that immense country, in which slavery already existed was devoted under national

guarantees to the slave interest. All that part of it which lies south of the parallel $36^{\circ}, 30'$, the line of the old Missouri compromise extended westward, was assigned, by permission, to slavery.

Our last great accession of territory was the result of the Mexican war. It was obtained by conquest and purchase, and was added to the Union without restriction as to slavery. Congress, on this occasion, declined extending the Missouri compromise line any further towards the Pacific Ocean. California formed a Constitution for herself, excluding slavery, and was admitted into the Union as a free State. It was this and other questions connected with it, that shook the country so fearfully in 1850.

It is now insisted that the legislation of that year is inconsistent with the legislation of 1820, and that because California has been admitted as a free State, though a portion of its territory lies below $36^{\circ}, 30'$, therefore the whole region of Nebraska, most of which is north of the designated line, and was secured to freedom, for a consideration, thirty years before, should be opened to slavery. In other words that because Congress refused to sanction a new compromise, on the line of $36^{\circ}, 30'$, in 1850, therefore the old compromise of 1820, which had reference to an entirely different territory, has become inoperative and void, and ought to be annulled.

Not to dwell on the fallacy of this reasoning at present, it is obvious that a very great change has taken place since the Revolution in public sentiment, especially at the South, on the subject of slavery. Then it was confessed to be an evil, its progress was carefully restricted, and its ultimate removal was anticipated and

desired. The same general feeling continued for several years afterward. Nor was it sentiment without practice. It was estimated by the distinguished editor of the Commentaries of Blackstone, Judge Tucker of Virginia,* that during the interval between 1782 and 1791, a period of only nine years, ten thousand slaves obtained freedom by voluntary manumission, in Virginia, under authority of her legislature. Now, on the contrary, the system is often defended by southern politicians as beneficial to the State, and sometimes by southern ministers of the gospel, as being sanctioned by the Old Testament and the New. Measures are taken to secure its increase and perpetuity. The desire for new lands, adapted to slave labor, is insatiable; and to obtain them, men in high positions seem willing to run the risk of a civil rupture, which if it comes will deluge the country in blood.

Three things have been chiefly instrumental in producing this change. First and foremost is the increased demand for cotton and remarkable success in its cultivation. It is a noticeable fact that the first seeds of this great southern staple were sown in 1621, the year after the first twenty African slaves were sold in the Colony. The progress of the cotton crop was slow. In 1791 the whole export from the United States was sixty-four bags of three hundred pounds each.† According to the last Patent Office Reports, there were exported from the United States in 1821, 124,893,405 pounds; in 1849, 1,026,602,269 pounds; that is, above a thousand millions pounds more in 1849 than in 1821; or an increase in the surplus production of cotton, above the home consumption, of more than eight hundred per

* Walsh's Appeal.

† Am. En.

centum in twenty-eight years. The average crop at the present time is put down at three thousand bales of four hundred pounds each, or 1,200,000,000 pounds. It is thought that the production of this article and the demand for it must continue to increase for many years. There are immense regions of choice cotton land yet uncultivated, particularly in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas, and a prospect that the exportation of this article will become constantly greater until its value reaches \$300,000,000 per annum. This has been, is, and is to be, the grand staple of the Southern States. White laborers could not probably live on the cotton plantations of the remote South. Colored men from the free States would not go there. Manumitted negroes might not easily be controlled, in any considerable numbers, or made to work, in this kind of agriculture. There is, therefore, a most powerful inducement to discourage emancipation, increase the number of slaves and make the system of bond labor perpetual. Why should not the desire of improving one's worldly condition blunt the moral sensibility and pervert the judgment on this subject as it does on others? No doubt the cotton trade has had this effect.

Another cause of the change, partly produced by the foregoing, is a desire of political preponderance. When slavery was looked upon as a temporary affair, there was no strong southern sentiment against emancipation, whenever a State should desire to attempt it. No matter if two-thirds of the states should be free, the remainder would have little to fear from national legislation. Now the slaveholding interest struggles, if not for decided ascendancy, at least to preserve the balance of power. To meet the rapid growth of the free states, resulting

from the abundance of every thing necessary to support life, and from emigration, new cotton lands must be obtained, new slave states formed, and the numbers, in the Senate at least, from the slave states, be kept equal to the numbers from the free. It has become with the South, as they consider it, almost a struggle for national existence.

This cause has been rendered more powerful by the excitement at the North on the subject of abolition. Besides that love of freedom and hatred of oppression, which pervades this section of the country, and which embraces rational views, and confines its philanthropic efforts to practicable schemes, in reference to the slave, a wild fanaticism has sprung up among us. It has poured forth its floods of wormwood and gall indiscriminately, in every form of invective which language can utter. The South has become alarmed; efforts for emancipation have been exchanged to efforts for self-preservation; even the Christian sentiment of the South has said, the only course of safety for ourselves and our colored people with us, is in a firm and united conservatism which shall yield nothing to northern pressure till the tempest has gone past.

There are those also at the South who have been influenced in this change of feeling by the degraded and miserable condition of the free blacks among them, and by the dangers which must result from having large numbers of them in their midst, associating freely with the slave population.

These are the leading causes which have brought about such an unfavorable change in the feelings of southern politicians and southern Christians, in reference to the manumission of slaves. Of these several causes, the first

mentioned, viz. the increased demand for cotton and its successful cultivation, stands foremost, and is at the foundation.

This general review and exhibition of causes, prepares us for the question, in what estimation should American slavery be held ?

Slavery may be considered by itself, or in connection with the evils which are generally inseparable from it. Considered by itself, is slaveholding necessarily and in all cases sinful ? In other words, is it not possible for a person to stand in the legal relation of master to a slave, without offending God thereby ? I am ready to answer in the affirmative, though in my opinion such an answer should neither lessen our abhorrence of slavery nor our desire for its removal. I can imagine many cases in which it would be clearly merciful, in accordance with the sentiment of our text, perfectly right, for a person to sustain this relation for a time. To say, that to hold a slave under any circumstances and for ever so short a period, is sinful, is to speak extravagantly and in a way which will never commend itself to the consciences of them who are thus denounced. Nothing is gained, but much lost by attempting to prove too much. The battle is fought, in such cases, on a remote abstraction or exception, and the available positions of the enemy are left unharmed. Let us concede, then, that it may be possible, under peculiar circumstances and for a limited period, for a person to stand in the relation of master to a slave, and for a body politic to uphold such a relation without committing sin thereby. If it were not so, we must condemn the practice of the patriarchs and the institutions of Moses, as involving sin in the founder of the institutions and the authors of that practice. The cases

supposed, however, are only exceptions, and exceptions usually strengthen the general rule. We come then to slaveholding as a system.

There are those who affirm boldly that slaveholding, even as a system for modern times, is sanctioned by the sacred Scriptures. This is not my opinion. But did it not exist under the old dispensation, and did it not receive the approbation of God? It existed, and was tolerated, and regulated by civil statute, but not commanded nor as I think, strictly speaking, approved by the author of the Mosaic law. So polygamy existed, and was tolerated and regulated, but not commanded, nor really approved under the same law. As the latter was suffered, not because it was right in itself, but, as our Saviour teaches, on account of the hardness of men's hearts, or in other words, as the best thing that could be done under the circumstances, and among a people so long and thoroughly habituated to its practice, so I suppose it was with slavery. It was not instituted as desirable in itself, but permitted in the circumstances under limitations. It was not practicable at that moment to do it entirely away—it *was* possible to restrain it, and mitigate its hardships, and overrule it for good. The lawgiver preferred practicability to abstraction, to do the best thing which the circumstances allowed, rather than submit to a more unfavorable alternative.

But suppose for argument's sake that slaveholding was established, as a positive institution for the Hebrews, by the divine Lawgiver. Such a fact could not properly be adduced in justification of slaveholding for coming ages. The most which could be inferred from it is, that in certain peculiar circumstances existing in ancient

times, and within the limits of a single nation, the practice could exist without the commission of sin on the part of those who engaged in it. The conclusion would be much too broad for the premises, if we should aver that because God authorised a system of slavery, several thousand years ago, for a particular nation, therefore, he had given his sanction to similar systems for all coming time. Morality is progressive, not indeed in its immutable principles, but in its developments and applications. Wars and fightings are wrong in themselves; they proceed from the unhallowed lusts of men, and before the termination of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth must wholly cease, and yet in an early age, and under peculiar circumstances wars and fightings, and these too not for defence but aggression, have been divinely required. To justify modern slavery by the slavery under the Mosaic law, as well as to justify offensive war in modern times by the "holy wars" of the Hebrews, we must show that the cases are parallel to each other, and that what was right in the one case would be right in the other. So much by way of concession. I do not, however, consider Hebrew slavery as an institution established for its inherent excellence, but as a vicious system, which it was necessary to tolerate for a time. I look upon it as a malignant tumor on the body politic which could be checked, and in progress of years perhaps cured, but not suddenly removed without peril of life.

What shall we say of the New Testament? Did our Saviour any where, in so many words, prohibit or denounce slavery? Certainly he did not. Did the apostles condemn it, in express terms? They did not. It existed in their times, and in oppressive forms. It ex-

isted among the early Christians. Slaveholding, so far as we can learn, was not a barrier against admission to the churches, and the apostles have even set forth the reciprocal duties of masters and slaves towards each other. Does it follow then, that the New Testament sanctions slavery? By no means. Does it not contain great principles which must eventually sweep it from the face of the earth? How can I admit the sentiment of our text, and yet deny liberty forever to my fellow men? How can I love my neighbor as myself, and yet consign him and his posterity to hopeless bondage? Is it not manifest, in the spirit and on the face of the gospel, that the religion of Jesus was intended for the elevation of all classes of men, bringing the human family into one great brotherhood, in which each should do to others as he would that others should do to him? So the church in past ages has generally understood the will of Christ, and with all its corruptions, it has been the great defender and deliverer of men from their oppressors. So true is this, that an impression prevailed for a time in the American colonies, that a Christian could not be a slave, and that to baptize a bondman would be to give him his freedom.

How then shall we account for it, that slavery is not forbidden in so many words? We account for it from the fact that Christ was the wisest of reformers, and did not make direct attacks on governments and institutions, to defeat perhaps the very ends he had in view; but contented himself with efforts to regenerate individual character, and to establish principles which in the course of their development, and in the progress of ages would regenerate society. Polygamy, indeed, he denounced in form, as the principles which must finally

destroy it, though they exist, were not so obvious; but despotism and slavery, both of which are abhorrent to the spirit of his gospel, he did not denounce in express words, but left them to the counter-working power and spirit of the principles of his religion.

Come now to natural reason and conscience. Bring slaveholding to this bar. Does the law of our moral nature justify it? The idea of seizing upon a human being, an immortal man with all his capabilities, thoughts, feelings, created as he is in the image of God, the brother and in natural rights the equal of other men, and when charged with no fault, buying and selling, and working him as a brute—working him not for *his* advantage, but our own—is monstrous, and finds no countenance in the law written on the heart.

But take slavery with its usual concomitants, and how immense its miseries! How it degrades the immortal man! Bought and held as property, controlled for another's benefit, deprived of the means of education, denied the usual rights of a man, the marriage institution reduced to a nullity, liable to have his children torn from him by violence, exposed to the tyranny of an unreasonable master or mistress—how painful is such a condition to contemplate! Tell me not of the fidelity and kindness of many a Christian slaveholder—tell me not how careful high-minded planters are to keep families together, and how well these dependent ones are often loved and treated. Undoubtedly many a mistress is as tender as a mother, and many a master bears in his bosom a compassionate heart. But look into the slave markets—see the manacled victims bound they know not whither; cast your eyes over the cotton fields of Alabama and Texas; inquire of the old men and old women for the

fate of their children ; see how the bloom of those young girls is consumed ; how those sick ones faint under urgings, if not the lash ; and how yonder happy family is all broken up in a day, by the coming in of some iron-hearted trader ; and towards a system under which such things are common, you can have no feelings but those of horror and disgust. I do not wonder at the intense abhorrence of it which exists among us. I confess that when I look only at one side of the case, when I have “ considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun ; and beheld the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter ; and on the side of their oppressors was power ; but they had no comforter,” I have “ praised the dead which were already dead more than the living which are yet alive.” The idea of droves of negroes, human beings, chained together two and two ; of mothers bereaved of their children, into whose soul the *iron* has entered — the curses and the lash — they fill me with grief and indignation ; the blood rushes to my heart, and my heart to my throat, with a sensation which is intolerable. I loathe such a system. Away with it ; it is a system of abominations ; how can the bright sun in the heavens look upon it without eclipse !

But are there no palliating circumstances which should inspire us with feelings of charity towards the South ? If there are, both common justice and the principle embraced in our text require me to notice them. What we want on the subject is not indiscriminate censure, but the truth. Northern denunciations have too often been sweeping, hard and defamatory, tending to exasperate rather than convince. Candor in admitting all reasonable excuse gives your words power, where apologies fail.

There are such circumstances. Slavery was not introduced into the country by the present generation of masters. It is an evil entailed upon them. They find it intertwined with and grown in upon their national and domestic existence. They were brought up in it, and never have learned any other mode of living. Their climate, the nature of their soil, their methods of cultivation, the inferiority and dependence of the negro race, the affection which often exists between master and slave, have all a tendency to prevent the full action of conscience against the system.

It must also be confessed that there are great difficulties in the way of sudden emancipation. What is to be done with these vast multitudes of semi-barbarians, unaccustomed to liberty, uneducated, incapable of providing for themselves? Are they capable of self-government? Could they found or sustain political institutions? Would it be in the power of any police to control them? What would become of them? What would become of the white race in the anarchy and license which must follow? Is amalgamation possible? If so, it must be the work of time. But is not the idea horrible? Shall the manumitted slaves be sent away by thousands to the free states? Will the free states receive them? Will Ohio, New York, Massachusetts receive them? Here is a difficulty—and it has seemed to many so insurmountable, that though friends of emancipation, they have given up all attempts to secure it in despair. There are southern Christians, southern ministers of the gospel, of as much benevolence and piety as any of you, who conscientiously think that immediate emancipation would be an evil and a sin; perilous to the whites, and unjust and cruel to the bondmen under their care. They con-

tent themselves, therefore, with endeavors to ameliorate the condition of the slaves, to secure to them an increase of advantages, to prevent the violent separation of families, to maintain the marriage institution inviolable among them, and to fit them for a world where all are brethren, and into which slavery can never come.

I have endeavored, in these remarks, to do justice to the condition and feelings of the southern masters. I know that there are humane and conscientious men among them—that many of this class are sorely pressed on this subject, by the circumstances in which they are placed. They have no complacency in the slave system, and wish it could be annihilated forever. But they neither know what to do, nor what to advise. Some of you, to be sure, at this distance, far away from the scene of embarrassment, pressed by none of these difficulties, out of the reach of any evils which might follow sudden emancipation, and called to make no sacrifices and take no responsibility in the case, think yourselves capable of directing what should be done. You declaim loudly and denounce indiscriminately, and insist that every yoke shall be broken, though the heavens come down on our heads. But sober, wise and thinking men, living in the midst of inherited slavery, are often at their wits' ends on the question, how shall we dispose of it?

I have endeavored, as I said, to do justice to the South. And I am willing for the sake of the true men and patriots it contains—notwithstanding there are so many who hold on upon slavery with a relentless grasp—to leave the odious system, for the present, in the states where it exists, and where Congress has

no power over it, to the wisdom and philanthropy found among those most immediately affected by it, trusting that the religion of Jesus, the progress of free principles throughout the earth, kind expostulation and argument, instead of insulting invective, from the North, together with other causes which Providence has already put in motion, will eventually secure the long wished for freedom.

Let it now be noticed, on the other hand, that these palliations belong only to states in which slavery has already become a settled system. They do not apply at all to new territory whose virgin soil has never been polluted by the sweat of a slave, still less to lands which have been forever pledged by solemn agreement to freedom. They all have reference to a state of mind, in which slavery is realized as a national and social curse, but to which no safe means of its removal are apparent. Slavery as a system, tolerated only from the necessities of the case, is an entirely different thing from slavery upheld as a desirable arrangement, to be extended and perpetuated. When you come to legislate for the indefinite spread and perpetuation of it, the whole question is changed. Apologies have no relevancy. Just grounds of charity vanish. The spirit of the Revolution, which was a spirit of universal freedom, gives place to a spirit of semi-national despotism. The times of the first Pharaoh return upon us. The cupidity which tore the Africans from their home on another continent, and which is now denounced by all civilized nations under heaven, seems at this late day, by such efforts, to be more than half justified. Excuses become intolerable, and a solemn protest, in the name of justice and before God, is demanded by every right

minded patriot. Just so far as any man or class of men wish to extend slavery, whether from avarice or a desire for political predominance, they are to be looked upon as guilty of a mighty wrong, and provoking the vengeance of heaven. I will not say that the vast accessions of slave territory which we have made since the formation of the Constitution, are all the result of a desire to perpetuate and extend the odious institution; or on the part of the northern politicians, to secure favor in a quarter whence cometh promotion; for it is the prerogative of ANOTHER to judge men's motives. But I do say that just so far as individuals or masses have been actuated by such desires, treason has been committed against the country, against humanity and against God. And well may we tremble when we consider the oppressions of the old nations and who it is that has dashed them in pieces.

This brings me to recent events. A bill has recently been brought into Congress for the repeal of that compromise law, by which the whole territory of Nebraska and Kansas was secured to freedom forever. The measure was hurried through the Senate, and passed by a large majority, and has just been arrested for a season in its passage through the House. It took the country by surprise, no one demanded it, no existing excitement was to be allayed by it, no man was prepared for it, the nation was struck mute before it. Scarcely yet has its outcry of indignation begun to be heard. But voices are coming up like the noise of many waters, saying: "Oh, do not this abominable thing which our soul hateth!" And the chorus of voices will swell on, till to the excited imagination of them who would perpetrate the wrong, the fingers of a spirit hand will be seen on

the wall, writing as of old, "thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting."

The object of this bill is to form those vast regions into territorial organizations, and in doing this, to repeal the Missouri Compromise Act, so far as the exclusion of slavery is concerned, from the country north of the parallel of north latitude, $36^{\circ}, 30'$, and thus to remove all hindrances to the ingress of a slave population. It is a great country, situated in the very heart of the North American continent, sufficient in extent for an empire, being in area, it is said, fifty times as large as the State of Vermont. It has a fine climate, is rich in agricultural resources, is capable of sustaining an immense population, and may have in time a very controlling influence on the destinies of the nation. It has, moreover, been secured to freedom by formal public arrangements, by a price agreed to and paid, for all coming time. It is now proposed to annul this compromise, so far as the freedom of these regions is concerned, and open them to slavery.

The proposition has been brought forward without any seeming necessity for it. Territorial organizations are not needed there, and in the ordinary course of things, would not be for a considerable time to come. One large portion of the territory has been devoted to the Indians under solemn national guarantees. In all the rest of it, there are not, it is supposed, fifteen hundred inhabitants of any description, and not intelligent settlers enough to carry on the simplest territorial government. The bill is presented in every respect prematurely. It agitates the nation without any necessity. The whole country has been kindled into a blaze, not from any accident of fire, but as it were by an incendiary's torch. We have just passed through a great national crisis con-

nected with this terrible subject of slavery. It shook the whole country. It impeded the common action of legislation for successive Congresses, and stopped the wheels of government so far as its usual purposes are concerned, for the greater part of a year. It cost the lives of three statesmen, than whom America has never had three nobler sons, or at least hastened them to the grave. A chief magistrate of the nation fell before its exacting responsibilities. It was a time of recrimination, of passion. The ship of state labored in the storm, and its boldest pilots feared a wreck. Those awful days had gone past. Peace, fraternal regard, prosperity, were rapidly coming back. Nearly all the great questions respecting slavery as a national interest, seemed to be settled. To the surprise of the country and of the world, in an instant, at the waving of the wand of a single magician, the tempest has burst upon us again with redoubled fury. An act is threatened which, if consummated, will give a blow to the Union from which, so far as human foresight can perceive, it will never recover.

It is pretended that the compromises of 1850, contain a principle which contradicts and annuls the compromise of 1820. Miserable sophism! I do not profess to be a lawyer. I belong to the 3,050 New England ministers who do not understand public affairs; but common sense teaches me that the act of 1820, which was from its nature irrevocable, a compact between two parties for so much present advantage on the one side, and so much future advantage on the other; the conditions of the compact having been completely fulfilled on the one side, and remaining to be fulfilled on the other, cannot be destroyed by the acts of 1850, passed long after the ir-

revocable fulfilment of all the conditions on the one side, and before the conditions had been fulfilled on the other; especially when no mention is made in the acts of 1850 of any repeal or possibility of repeal, or hidden principle tending to repeal of the act of 1820, and that if the acts of 1850 are contradictory (which cannot be shown, as they relate to a different subject,) to the act of 1820, the last in point of time, will be nullified by the first in point of time, and not the first by the last. The amount due the southern side of the agreement has been sacredly and entirely paid; place the northern side on equal footing, and then we may talk of new bargains. It is like this: two boys have a jack-knife and a quart of shagbarks in common. They agree to divide. James takes the shagbarks and eats them; John takes the knife and keeps it. Some months after they come into possession of two or three pounds of nails and half a dozen kites. After a long dispute they agree upon what seems to them an equitable division, and both parties are satisfied. At length, as John one day is showing his knife, James cries out, "that knife is as much mine as it is yours; the principle on which we divided last, destroys the bargain which we made first." "Give me back those shagbarks which you eat up," says John, "and then I'll talk with you about the principle. If you do not, as you eat the shagbarks, I'll keep the knife." I say to Congress, you must get Missouri out of the Union, yes, and two or three other slave states, before you can put yourself in a position to open Nebraska and Kansas to slavery, without the full consent of the North.

My main objections to this bill stand on high moral grounds. First, it cannot pass without a violation of the public faith. I do not deny that Congress may

possibly have legal power to perpetrate the act. Congress is national, and is supposed to know no North and no South in its great measures. It may say, "I do and I undo, and none can hinder me." The legality, the constitutionality of such a position is a question for the Supreme Court, for Congress is not quite omnipotent, even speaking politically. It is not a question for me. So far as my present discourse is concerned, I agree that Congress has a legal power to annul its former action on the subject. But what is legal power compared with moral obligation? Was there not an understanding between the North and the South on the subject of the Missouri Compromise, such as could not be violated between man and man without gross dishonor. And was not Congress privy to it, consenting to it, sanctioning it. So the compact was viewed at the time, and so it will be viewed forever. The South as well as the North looked upon it in this light. A passage which has been recently quoted more than once in the United States Senate, from Niles' Register, published in Baltimore, March 11, 1820, giving the northern view of the case, is believed to express the general sentiment, at the time the act was passed. "It is true," says this writer, "the compromise is supported only by the letter of the law, repealable by the authority which enacted it; but the circumstances of the case give to this law a *moral force* equal to that of a positive provision of the Constitution; and we do not hesitate to say that the Constitution exists in its observance." The repeal of such a law, under the circumstances, involves then a violation of public faith, and must lead to the most perilous consequences. If this compact can be broken, all similar compacts can be broken. No new

compact can be made, with any certainty of its being fulfilled. Those legal enactments and moral understandings by which the South is benefited, and which were granted for a consideration, may be repealed at any moment by the northern vote, and national guarantees to the North furnish no security to its interests, whenever a few northern representatives and senators can be induced, as from ambition or other reasons some of them often are, to aid the united action of the South. Should great occasions again occur, when compromise or civil war is the dread alternative, compromise will be impossible. No one will have confidence in it. Congress will have rendered itself powerless for good, in any such emergency. Public morality also will have become impotent, and we shall look upon each other as not to be trusted.

There is a principle of morality involved in this bill respecting the remaining Indian tribes. A large section of the territory under consideration has been sacredly pledged to their independent control and use. They have received it from the government instead of lands surrendered by them on the eastern side of the Mississippi. During the administration of President Jackson and afterwards according to his policy, nineteen tribes of them were constrained to leave their old haunts and the graves of their fathers, and take up their abode in the far off West. Many thought this at the time an act of oppression, and in violation of national treaties. The lamented Evarts plead powerfully and with an intensity of injured feeling and effort, which some supposed cost him his life, in behalf of the perishing remnants of an older age. But the removal was justified, not only as a necessity, but as an act of mercy, and the only means of

preserving a race which seemed to be melting entirely away. Their new home, far from the habitations of the white man, was to be free from his encroachments forever. But according to the principles of this new bill, the Indian must lose his nationality, or be driven onward, and we know not whither, towards the setting sun. All that he has done in fitting up his new home, all the progress he has made in civilization, all his hopes of stability and security, and of saving the remnants of his race, vanish in a moment. Despair awaits him. True this bill provides that no encroachment shall be made on Indian territory without Indian consent. But how much volition will the Indians have in the case? About as much as a little child has, when the parent's mind is made up beforehand what that volition must be, and puts in requisition every art of coaxing, promising, scolding and terrifying to bend it to his own. I well remember, that one of the agents in the former removal was directed to persuade the Indians to it, "by moving upon them in the line of their prejudices." And they will be moved upon again in the same way, and after much resistance, distress, savage fury, perhaps blood, they will yield, though it be to their own destruction. One act of consent on their part will be sufficient; nor will years afterwards of regret, and grief, and rage, be of any avail. It was a noble declaration of President Harrison, in his Inaugural Address, when he said, "I can conceive of no more sublime spectacle, none more likely to propitiate an impartial and common Creator, than a rigid adherence to the principles of justice on the part of a powerful nation, in its transactions with a weaker and uncivilized people, whom circumstances have placed at its disposal." The

Indian is a doomed race. He is the remnant of a vast population which once overspread this continent. His proud spirit is broken, his council fires are going out, his blood will soon cease to flow in the veins of man. Let it be said thousands of years hence, when this nation shall exist, perhaps, as Rome, as Greece, as Egypt exist, only in history, that America was the protectress of this dependent race, and sacredly kept faith with its waning tribes till the last war-dance was ended, and the red man perished from the earth.

The passing of this bill would imply an acknowledged change in national policy and feelings with regard to the permanence and increase of slavery. It would be saying to the world, that young America not only repudiates the old northern anti-slavery doctrines of the Revolution, but rejects as obsolete the almost united sentiment of the southern patriots of a former generation. It has outgrown the fears, the humanity, the hatred of oppression which characterized the councils of Washington, of Madison, of Marshall, and of him, the generous, far-seeing patriot of a later age, ever ready to make sacrifices for the peace of the Union—Henry Clay. To their minds, slavery was a moral wrong, a social curse, a national disgrace. It was to be limited; not extended, not perpetuated; but as early as may be, removed. In a speech before the American Colonization Society, at Washington, in 1827, Mr. Clay said: "If I could be instrumental in eradicating this deepest stain from the character of our country, and removing all cause of reproach on account of it, by foreign nations; if I could only be instrumental in ridding of this foul blot that revered State which gave me birth, or that not less beloved State which kindly adopted me as her son,

I would not exchange the proud satisfaction which I should enjoy, for the honor of all the triumphs ever decreed to the most successful conqueror." In another speech, delivered on a similar occasion in 1829, in Kentucky, he exclaims: "Is there no remedy? Must we endure perpetually all the undoubted mischiefs of a state of slavery, as it affects both the free and bond portion of these states? What mind is sufficiently extensive in its reach, what nerves sufficiently strong to contemplate this vast and progressive augmentation, [of the slave population] without an awful foreboding of the tremendous consequences?"* In opposition to these great sentiments, now we say, let slavery come, let it cover our territories, let it exist as a part of our policy, and be perpetuated to the remotest generations.

What might be the ultimate effect of the act contemplated, this is not the place to divine. I believe in an Almighty Governor of nations. I have confidence, from causes already in operation and the high overrulings of Heaven, that even this bill would redound in the end to the advancement of freedom. Depend upon it, if passed it will be a bad move for the South. It was expected that the Mexican war would bring great accessions of power to the slave interest. But under the control of Him who turneth the councils of men into foolishness, the Mexican war gave the heaviest blow to slavery which it has ever received since the formation of the Constitution. What has been, might be, will be again. But through what convulsions the nation must first pass, God only knows. We certainly cannot be justified if, by our supineness, we run the dreadful hazard. At the same time, we shall stand before the nations of

* Colton's Life, Vol. I., p. 189, 190.

the earth with unnumbered fingers of scorn pointed at us.

One objection more to the passage of this bill. It will exasperate the North, and give intensity to agitation. It will add strength to that indiscriminate abolition which has seemed to act from the beginning, without sense or reason, or any regard to consequences. The country will have no rest under it. It will be fetters on the limbs of freemen. And whatever may be the consequences, American freemen can never be held in chains. The slave may be crushed under the heel of oppression, but the Norman Saxon will have liberty or perish in the struggle for it. Slave labor and free labor cannot exist side by side. When you open those vast territories to a slave population, you effectually drive out the enterprising freemen. You shackle northern liberties. You say to the free agriculturists of New England, and New York, and Ohio, bow down, that we may go over; and the free agriculturists of New England, New York and Ohio, are not the men to lay their body as the ground and the street to them that go over. You also say to the Northern States, you must henceforth tolerate slavery, wherever it shall please to take possession, in every inch of territory which you now own, or may hereafter acquire. Under such a doctrine there will be agitations, and frenzied excitements, till the spirit of the old patriots triumphs again, or—I dare not contemplate the awful result.

It was under such convictions as these that the names of more than three thousand clergymen were given as quickly as the mails could bear them, to a solemn protest in the name of Almighty God, against this act of peril and wrong. There are those who think that the

ministers of the gospel, knowing little of public affairs, should content themselves with feeding their quiet flocks, and leaving great national questions to those who have the ability to discuss them. But in what country do we live? What blood is it that is rushing through our veins? Are we not descendents of the non-conformists of England and of the outspoken old Puritans of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay? Are we not sons of those revolutionary sires, of whom the Italian, Botta, in his history of our great struggle for independence says, that no one cause conduced more to success than the opinions and preaching of the American clergy? My paternal and maternal grand-parents were ministers of the gospel and faithful in their calling. The one defended the cause of liberty in the State councils of New Hampshire, stirred up his people in many a sermon to quit themselves like men, and sent his sons into the field; the other shouldered his musket when he heard that the battle was raging on Bunker hill, and hastened to the scene of action, that as a surgeon he might bind up the wounds of the bleeding soldier, and as a minister of Christ, impart the consolations of religion to the dying patriot. If any standing on the high places of the nation for a time, make bold to ask me why such as *I* dare to express an opinion on public affairs, I answer: first, because I am a man, and honorable senators are no more. Second, because I am an American, and would not have my rulers, by ambitious compliances, become less. Third, because I am a minister of Christ, and while I pay my taxes as a citizen and enjoy no more civil immunities than others, I have as much right to petition Congress, on subjects connected with my professional interests, as the iron men, or the coal men, or the

merchants have to petition Congress on subjects connected with their employments. At no time in the history of the country have the ministers of the gospel been behind the foremost in patriotism and efforts for the public good. Ordinarily, it is true, they are but little inclined to mingle in the strifes of political men. But there are times when inaction on public affairs is not, in their opinion, a virtue. They are not *afraid* to speak. In proportion as they bend lower before the Almighty, they stand the more erect in the presence of their fellow men. As citizens, they have as much at stake as others; as teachers of morality, they have as much right to express opinions on questions of national right and wrong, as any in the land. As those whose office it is to pray and labor for the elevation of their race, and the times of universal brotherhood among men, the proper business of their life is made to suffer, when any public act degrades the nation or works moral injury to any class of the people. They are educated by the circumstances of their profession, to speak boldly, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. They would sooner surrender their ministry than give up their liberty of speech. And when large bodies of New England clergymen speak in the name of the Almighty before the nation, let politicians understand, it is because they are confident that every attribute in His awful nature is on their side.

Some have passed censure on the "Clerical Protest," so called, on the ground that it speaks in the name of God, or under acknowledged conviction of responsibility to Him, and of exposure to divine vengeance as the consequence of wrong doing. For the propriety of this style, I have nothing to say, except to refer those who pro-

fess to be shocked by it, to their own Jefferson, whose language on this subject is, if possible, more awful. "I tremble," said he, "for my country, when I reflect that God is just, and that his justice cannot sleep forever." And again, "Shall we never learn to be just to our fellow creatures? Shall we blindly pursue the advantages of the moment, and neglect the still but solemn voice of God, until —

‘Vengeance in the lurid air,
Lifts her red arm exposed and bare.’ ”

I wish that these three thousand clergymen could give full expression of their feelings to the South. If I could deem myself worthy to speak in their name, I would say: "Brethren and fellow citizens of the South, we are not the fanatics and abettors of political incendiaries that you think us. You have heard the frenzied language of ultra, vulgar, denunciatory, infidel abolition. This is not the voice of New England, least of all, of its ministry. We have received from it the only honor which it would bestow upon us, the honor of being denounced by it. We have been called pro-slavery, apologists for slavery, and when we have refused to join in its mad tirade, 'dumb dogs that would not bark.' We are, indeed, anti-slavery in our principles, and in some sense, emancipationists. But we have considered your position; we have had confidence in the good intentions of your patriots and Christian men, and have learned lessons of moderation and charity. Your fugitive slave law was odious, disgusting to us. It brought terror into the hearts of our colored fellow citizens. Taking counsel of their fears rather than of reason, they fled before it like affrighted sheep when pursued by wolves. They saw a kidnapper in every strange face.

Some of them, or their mothers, had once been slaves. Two highly respectable men, deacons of a church of colored people in Boston, had to be purchased from their former owners at the rate of four hundred dollars a piece, against the chance of being remanded into slavery. And yet, we tolerated this sickening law! There are many colored people whom we respect and love. I see before me a man of this character as I preach in this pulpit from Sabbath to Sabbath, whom I could no more surrender to the slave catcher, than if he were my brother.* And yet, most of us cautioned our people against violently resisting your law. We submitted to it as a dreadful necessity for the sake of the nation, for the sake of the pledges of the Constitution, and because we had confidence in you, that in the spirit of your own fathers, you would rarely after the first moment, attempt its execution.

“Brethren and fellow citizens of the South, manifest to us the generous heart of your own great patriots; show us something of the tenderness and justice towards the weak which belong to you as men, abstain from unnatural attempts to force the dark flood of slavery over regions not yet contaminated thereby; deplore the evil, as your fathers did, which exists among you and endangers us all; take measures for its limitation, and so far as may be in your power for its ultimate removal, and we will not annoy you by demanding impossibilities. We will interpose, so far as we can, between you and any among us who would infringe on your rights. Our voice, our hearts, our purse shall serve you in delivering the whole of this land from the greatest curse which has ever befallen it.

* A colored man, for many years a faithful servant in the author's family.

“Gentlemen planters of the South, we have looked upon you as haughty, imperious, perhaps passionate; sometimes carrying your ideas of self respect beyond the dictates of sober judgment, but having great and generous qualities, and being withal the soul of honor. We have admired your statesmen; to our imagination there was a grandeur about them, a patriotism and a magnanimity which covered many imperfections. But let them pause! If they perpetrate this deed of injustice, if for any reason, however aided by northern treachery their ancient faith is once violated, the charm will be broken, and instead of chivalrous men we shall see in them only covenant breakers and oppressors. It cannot be. Voices among themselves have already been raised against the sacrilegious act. Southern fidelity, I believe, will put its solemn veto upon it. But if disappointed, if our ancient confidence must perish, we will raise a monument for our posterity over its grave, and write upon it this brief but mournful inscription, ‘SOUTHERN HONOR NOT TO BE TRUSTED.’”

I have spoken of the South as if the principal danger in reference to the passage of the Nebraska bill, was from that quarter. But one thing is certain, if this act of injustice is ever consummated, it will not be by the united vote of the South. The responsibility, the guilt of it, will rest chiefly on northern men; not on the people, the masses of the North, but on individual politicians, the leaders, perhaps, of a party, who, for reasons known to themselves and to God, are willing to throw the country into a ferment, and peril the interests of freedom for all coming time. Has the South sought this treacherous boon at their hands? Has the South thrown this firebrand into the Capitol of the Nation?

Will the South respect the authors of this incendiary attempt? Does the South wish to renew the excitements and dangers of 1850? The South may receive the proffered gift, though I yet believe that there is honor enough in that part of the country to spurn it. But should the South accept the agency of northern instruments in such a business, will she not at the same time despise them? When they have done this base work for her, will she not throw them aside "as tools broken in the using?" How will they appear before the nations of the earth? What will history say of them hereafter? How will posterity regard them? For the South it may find apologies, for northern treachery it can express nothing but contempt.

This is a day of fasting and humiliation before God, and never had we more cause. The wrongs which the African and the Indian races have suffered at our hands, the storm in which our ship of State reels to and fro and staggers like a drunken man, the possibilities of the future, too terrible to be contemplated, should lead us to bow ourselves to the very dust before the Almighty.

But humiliation is not all. The times demand prudence, patriotism and wisely directed action. What shall we do? 1. One thing we must *not* do. We must not exasperate the South by indiscriminate denunciation. We must not insist on immediate impossibilities. We must not imagine for a moment that there is no patriotism and no piety south of the Potomac. We must not encourage that perpetual tirade of obloquy which is visited on the southern churches. Misrepresentation, ignorant, undistinguishing reproaches, manifesting no sympathy and appreciating no difficulty, can

do no good. They have been fully tried, and have made the matter constantly worse and worse. Is it not so? Is Virginia now on the point of freeing her slaves? Could debates like those of her legislature in 1832 be reproduced in 1854, and be published, and circulated all over the Commonwealth, and be discussed by every slave capable of reading or hearing them? Is Kentucky where she was twenty years ago? Have not the hands on the dial plate of liberty gone backwards even in those old states where slavery had almost ceased to be a cherished institution and where the pecuniary motive was fast becoming favorable to manumission? I would abridge no man's liberty of speech. I know how much, from hearts full of humanity, ought to have been spoken, and how much has been wisely spoken. But I verily believe that if the entire North had held its tongue on the subject of abolition in the states, for the last quarter of a century, and given southern responsibility its full play, the prospect of early emancipation would be brighter than it is at present. Such is my conviction of the folly and sin of many northern men and northern associations on this subject.

2. Our whole bearing and manner should be that of a people who breathe nothing but the mountain airs of liberty, and mean, as far as possible, to impart their invigorating influences to all other men; at all events to preserve ourselves and our posterity from the pestilential atmosphere of a bond population.

3. Let the North be true to herself, firm and determined but honorable and conciliatory, proposing to bear her full proportion in the required sacrifices, acting out generously the entire sentiment of our text, and she will have nothing to fear.

On the other hand, we must not sleep. We must not suffer commercial gains, I speak to commercial men, or political hopes, I speak to political men, to blind our moral perceptions, or produce indifference. While we keep our own pledges towards the South, we must insist that there shall be no violation of faith on her part towards us. We must show the northern politician that betrays the cause of freedom for any reason, that by such acts he digs the grave of his ambitious hopes and buries them.

4. One simple duty but too often violated among us should receive attention. The negroes around us are to be treated as men; not paraded into public assemblies and prominent positions where they cannot feel at home; not forced into the social gatherings of those whose company, want of culture, custom, their own taste forbids them to enjoy; not, on the other hand, excluded from public conveyances, shrunk from as a contamination, or passed by with neglect, but treated with that sympathy and consideration which we should desire in their place. The African is a good citizen; he generally goes for law and order; he takes sides with the true gentleman against turbulent vulgarity. He has a tender heart. When Mungo Park was in Africa, on one occasion without food in a region of wild beasts, and a storm arising, he sat down under a tree dejected and ready to die. A negro woman took him to her hut, she and her attendants prepared him a supper, and made him comfortable for the night. Then resuming their task, spinning cotton, as the work went on, one of the young women sung, in a sweet and plaintive air, an extempore song, of which this is given as a true translation:—

The winds roared and the rains fell,
 The *poor white* man, faint and weary,
 Came and sat under our tree,—
 He has no mother to bring him milk,
 No wife to grind his corn.

The rest followed in chorus,—

Let us *pity the white* man;
 No mother has he to bring him milk,
 No wife to grind his corn.

This is the African heart towards the white man, when kindly treated by him, notwithstanding all the wrongs he has received at his hands.

5. We should hold ourselves in readiness to adopt any measures for the benefit of this much injured race which Providence may hereafter make practicable. It is a matter of congratulation that a new republic of African freemen has been called into existence in our day, on the shores of their father land. There, thousands of emancipated slaves are enjoying all the rights of free citizenship, and by their advancement in knowledge, in wealth, and in the science of self-government, are proving to the world that the black man is capable of elevation, and of sustaining for himself republican institutions. Liberia is a beacon light on those dark shores, promising social regeneration eventually to the entire African race. Let there be so much as one free nation of Africans on earth, intelligent, commercial, capable of making itself respected, and the days of slavery will be hastened on to their termination.

In this country it is destined to cease. Its termination exists in the decrees of God; prophecy assures us of it. The religion of Christ, the spirit of the age, the progress of man, the opinion of Europe and the world, the voice of enlightened conscience North and South,

together with local causes which we have not now time to develope, are all against its continuance. It will cease; and He whose province it is to bring good out of evil, will turn the curse into a blessing, at least to the oppressed race. As a consequence of slavery, Africa will be lifted up, and will come to take her stand as a great nation, on a level with the great nations of the earth.

Slaveholding will cease. If we are wise, patriotic, and truly benevolent, acting on the principle of our text, peaceably; if too impatient and violent, by scenes at the prospect of which imagination stands appalled. If we would avoid those scenes, if we would not hazard the horrors of a civil and servile war, if we would not see or have our children see a host of belligerent nations on the soil which we now call our country, we must not reject the lights of wisdom which have come down to us from the patriots of the Revolution, and which shone brilliantly and through the whole life of those two statesmen by whose leading agency the compromises of 1850 were confirmed. The times demand prudent men, far-seeing men, decided and fearless men, self-sacrificing men. The agitated country looks round for statesmen, to stand forth, with motives pure and open as the daylight, and say, "I shall do justice to the whole country, according to the best of my ability, in all I say, and act for the good of the whole country, in all I do. I mean to do this in absolute disregard of personal consequences. Let the consequences be what they will, I am careless. No man can suffer too much, and no man can fall too soon, if he suffer or if he fall in defence of the liberties and Constitution of his country."

We have no Webster now to stand in the breach and

receive on his noble breast the missiles which seemed to be aimed, blindly or otherwise, at the heart of the Union. He suffered, was it not too much; he fell, was it not too soon, though he suffered and fell in defence of the liberties and Constitution of his country? He lies as he fell, with the robes of his patriotism around him; the Union his monument, self-sacrifice his epitaph. Had that man lived there would have been no occasion for my discourse. Rise, great patriot, rise! mighty shade, stand forth! Before that voice of thunder and eye of fire, ambition would cower and hide itself, justice take its throne, and public faith sway her calm sceptre over the land!

I am still hopeful with regard to the future of our country. There are indeed great causes of solicitude. This one evil which we have been contemplating looks dark and portentous. Ambitious men will make use of it as a means of self-promotion, though it be amidst the bitter conflicts of a divided nation. But prayer, from all our temples and every Christian heart, will rise to heaven. The God of our fathers will control the destiny of their sons, and we shall yet become the best and foremost nation of the world.

I conclude in the language of Milton: "O thou, our most certain hope and defence," deliver this land from its treacherous foes; "let them all take counsel together and let it come to nought; let them decree and do thou cancel it; let them gather themselves and be scattered; let them embattle themselves and be broken; let them embattle and be broken for thou art with us. Amen!"

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